



***United States Attorney
Southern District of New York***

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CONTACT: U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
HERBERT HADAD, MEGAN GAFFNEY,
HEATHER TASKER, BRIDGET KELLY

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE
(212) 637-2600

**MANHATTAN U.S. ATTORNEY ANNOUNCES ARREST OF
MEXICAN COCAINE KINGPIN RESPONSIBLE FOR SMUGGLING MORE
THAN \$90 MILLION WORTH OF COCAINE INTO UNITED STATES**

*Mexican Kingpin and 24 Members of Crew Charged in Manhattan
Federal Court; Authorities Seize 700 Pounds of Cocaine and \$10
Million in Cocaine Proceeds from Organization*

MICHAEL J. GARCIA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and MICHAEL PASTERCHICK, JR., the Special Agent in Charge of the United States Drug Enforcement Administration ("DEA") in New Jersey, announced today the arrest of AGUSTIN HARO-RODRIGUEZ, a/k/a "Daniel Arceo-Fonceca," a Mexican cocaine kingpin allegedly responsible for importing close to 10,000 pounds of cocaine--worth more than \$90 million--from Mexico into the United States during the past year. Law enforcement authorities arrested HARO-RODRIGUEZ trying to cross the border from Mexico into Arizona late Sunday night. HARO-RODRIGUEZ appeared in Arizona federal court yesterday and was detained pending further proceedings to return him to Manhattan federal court.

Mr. GARCIA also announced the unsealing of narcotics-trafficking and money-laundering charges against HARO-RODRIGUEZ and 24 members of his criminal organization. To date, 17 of the 25 members of the drug-smuggling ring are in custody.

The arrest of HARO-RODRIGUEZ announced today constitutes the conclusion of "Operation Band on the Run," a DEA-led international law enforcement operation involving cooperation between United States authorities, acting under the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force ("OCDETF"), and Mexican authorities, working with the DEA's officer in Mexico. HARO-RODRIGUEZ is designated as a national Consolidated Priority Organization Target ("CPOT"), which means he is one of our country's most significant cocaine threats.

According to the Indictment unsealed in Manhattan federal court yesterday, AGUSTIN HARO-RODRIGUEZ, a/k/a "Daniel Arceo-Fonseca," was a Mexico-based supplier of massive quantities of cocaine, which were smuggled into the United States and distributed throughout the country--including in New York City--for resale. Between March 2004 and July 2005, HARO-RODRIGUEZ's criminal organization distributed 500 pounds of cocaine per month, with a street value of more than \$5 million, it was charged. According to the Indictment, during this time period, the criminal organization distributed close to 10,000 pounds of cocaine, with a street value of more than \$90 million. In

addition, after the cocaine was sold in the United States, one of HARO-RODRIGUEZ's top lieutenants, ISAAC VALDEZ-BARROT, a/k/a "Archy," coordinated the collection of millions of dollars of cocaine proceeds in the New York City area. VALDEZ-BARROT also arranged for HARO-RODRIGUEZ's drug money to be concealed in music equipment and other packages and transported across the United States border into Mexico, it was charged.

According to the Indictment and related extradition papers, during the investigation law enforcement authorities seized more than 700 pounds of cocaine and approximately \$10 million in cocaine proceeds from HARO-RODRIGUEZ's organization. For example, on February 3, 2005, law enforcement officers seized approximately 300 pounds of cocaine from one of HARO-RODRIGUEZ's criminal associates in Chicago, it was alleged. The following day, on February 4, 2005, other officers recovered 250 pounds of cocaine hidden inside music speakers in New Jersey, it was charged. Also in February 2005, law enforcement officers seized \$2.4 million cash and \$5.3 million cash in Las Vegas and New Jersey, respectively, from HARO-RODRIGUEZ's criminal organization, it was charged. Finally, on or about July 1, 2005, law enforcement authorities seized approximately 150 pounds of cocaine concealed in the back of a commercial truck in New Jersey, it was alleged. Photographs of some of HARO-RODRIGUEZ's drug money and cocaine are attached hereto.

If convicted, all the charged defendants face a maximum sentence of life imprisonment and a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years' imprisonment on the narcotics-trafficking charges. In addition, various defendants face an additional maximum sentence of 20 years' imprisonment on money-laundering charges.

Mr. GARCIA said: "HARO-RODRIGUEZ's arrest once again demonstrates that drug kingpins who operate outside the United States but send their illegal product to our communities will not escape prosecution and arrest."

Mr. PASTERCHICK said: "This arrest removed one of the world's top cocaine drug traffickers, who orchestrated the smuggling of thousands of kilograms of cocaine into the United States. AGUSTIN HARO-RODRIGUEZ was one of the nation's Consolidated Priority Organization Targets ("CPOTs"), which is a designation for the highest level of narcotic traffickers in the world. The arrest of HARO-RODRIGUEZ represents a resounding victory for American citizens, as he will no longer be able to distribute his brand of poison and accompanying violence to our communities."

Mr. GARCIA praised the investigative efforts of the DEA and Mexican authorities.

Assistant United States Attorney DANIEL STEIN is in charge of the prosecution.

The charges contained in the Indictment are merely accusations, and the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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